THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) 27 number of private telecom companies are providing access service in the country. The service being provided by these companies includes basic telephone service, cellular mobile telephone services depending upon the coverage. It is not mandatory for Cellular and Unified Access Services Operators to provide rural coverage.

(c) As intimated by BSNL the number of telephone connections provided in Bihar from 2003 till 30.6.2004 by BSNL given below:-

	WLL	Cable (Wireline)
Rural	9297	10914
Urban	4597	6757
TOTAL:	13894	17671

(d) As intimated by BSNL the target for Bihar fixed for 2004-05 are as follows:—

WLL Connections	80,000
Cable (Wireline) Connections	80,000

VPTs in Jharkhand

923. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the private basic service operators have not fulfilled their contractual obligation to provide VPTs in Jharkhand, so far;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of VPTs yet to be provided and by when, these would be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) As per the licence conditions of private basic service operator for Bihar Service Area including Jharkhand, there was no contractual obligation to provide VPTs in Jharkhand.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.